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Tangled spy tale started out with errand for friend

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Los Angeles—He remembers how the telephone rang on that afternoon in late February, and how he lifted the receiver to his ear. And he remembers how the bright, cheerful voice came crackling down the wire: "Hi, it's Chris. I'm headed over to Tijuana. Can you meet me at Denny's?"

Douglas Wargo reflected for a moment. Why not? His shift at The Butcher Shop, a popular steak house in Mission Valley, near San Diego and the California-Mexico border, would end soon. He had no plans for the evening. Why not join his newly acquired friend for dinner?

"Sure thing," he told Chris. "I'll see you in an hour."

Driving south toward the Mexican border, he speculated about what Chris might want from him. More legal advice, probably. More instructions on how to go about filing a legal appeal.

About an hour later, as he walked into the Tijuana restaurant, Wargo says he had no way of knowing that what appeared to be an innocent liaison would involve him in espionage.

Douglas Wargo had never been to law school. He was an amateur. At California's Lompoc Federal Correctional Institution, where he had done a short stint for mail fraud, his reputation as a jailhouse lawyer had made him a popular, important figure, however. It was that same reputation, he speculated, that had led Chris Boyce to seek his advice.

He never dreamed, he insists today, that his friend Chris was actually an escaped espionage agent in search of a courier—a pigeon who could be counted on to deliver

spy satellite secrets to a foreign country without asking questions.

As he turned into the parking lot of the busy Tijuana restaurant, Doug Wargo never imagined that he was about to be plunged into one of the most complicated, most bizarre—and, for the American intelligence community, most damaging—espionage cases of our era.

The espionage affair into which Doug Wargo was about to be drawn had begun in the spring of 1975, when a young Californian named Andrew Daulton Lee handed a package to a security guard at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City.

That package contained several computer cards recently stolen from the top-secret "black vault" at the mammoth TRW Corporation, in the Los Angeles suburb of Redondo Beach.

The cards were full of information related to an operation known as "Project Rhyolite," and were coded with data describing the U.S. spy satellite program, the mainstay of the country's defense against a surprise nuclear attack.

After examining Lee's package carefully, the elated Soviets entered into an 18-month partnership with him. On perhaps a dozen occasions, Lee delivered similar packages to the Soviet Embassy after meeting his Soviet contacts at downtown restaurants.

All the secret information peddled by Lee to the Soviet Union (the records show that tens of thousands of dollars were involved in the transactions) came from TRW; all of it had been stolen by a friend, a 22-year-old college dropout named Christopher John Boyce.

Boyce, a former altar boy and the son of a fiercely loyal FBI agent, had pilfered the documents while working as a \$140-a-week clerk—with top-secret security clearance—at the giant aerospace firm.

His duties included sending out daily "crypto codes" to American intelligence posts around the world. These codes—stored at TRW's "black vault"—were used to unravel the information observed by the satellite system.

The scheme worked well for a while. Lee, a convicted drug pusher with an expensive heroin habit, was happy with his extra income, and Boyce, a disillusioned idealist who had opposed the Vietnam War and hated the "system," was happy to strike a blow against the American military and get paid for it.

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